

JUSTIFICATION AS TAUGHT BY POST-REFORMATION LUTHERAN THEOLOGICIANS

The following brief outline with extensive citations is incomplete. There is no inclusion of certain aspects of the doctrine of justification such as the particulae exclusivae, grace, Law and Gospel, or of important topics related to this central doctrine such as the means of grace, repentance, absolution, good works, etc. I have not had time to research these themes sufficiently, but have restricted the present paper to what Melanchthon covers in AC III and IV.

1. Arrangement of topics relative to the doctrine, outline, and pattern of thought. (see page 2)
2. The article of justification as the praecipuus locus, the center of the circle, the Hauptartikel.

This article is the central point of theology according to which all other articles of faith are adjusted; it is the sacred ocean into which all other doctrines flow; it is the treasure chest of our faith which keeps safe and unharmed all the other doctrines. (Balthazar Meisner, ANOPSIOTODIAS Sacrae..., Wittebergae, 1663, p. 139)

This most glorious doctrine of the gracious justification of a sinner before the bar of God through Christ as He is accepted in true faith is the citadel of the whole Christian religion; it is the nexus by which all members of the body of Christian doctrine are joined together, and should this doctrine be violated, all the remaining articles will be abandoned and overthrown. (John Quenstedt, Systema, 1715 ed. II, 736)

This locus contains the sum of the Gospel. For it indicates the benefit which we derive from Christ, and offers immovable consolation to pious souls; it teaches which are the proper ways of worshipping God, what it means truly to call upon Him; and it sets the Church of God apart from other peoples, Jews, Mohammedans, and Pelagians, that is, from all who imagine that a man is righteous by the Law or by outward discipline and who bid us doubt concerning the remission of sins. (Martin Chemnitz, Loci Theologici, II, 215.)

This article is in a sense the stronghold and the high fortress of all the doctrine and of the entire Christian religion; if it is obscured or adulterated or set aside, the purity of doctrine in other articles of faith cannot possibly be maintained. But if this article is kept pure, all idolatry, superstitions, and whatever corruptions there are in other articles of faith tumble down of their own weight. (Martin Chemnitz, Loci Theologici, II, 200.)

THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE LUTHERAN FATHERS AS IT PERTAINS TO
CHRIST'S WORK IN RELATION TO THE SINNER'S JUSTIFICATION

The Work of Christ

active and passive obedience
obedience under the Law,
suffering, death, etc.

only occurring
for all men
prior to faith
and apart
from it

ecclestical
terms

The Results of Christ's Work

Righteousness (justification*)
Salvation
Reconciliation**
Victory
Forgiveness

Redemption
Propitiation**

Satisfaction
(English: Atonement)**
Merit
Benefits

The Work of the Holy Spirit

secured (had)
always
per
fidem

concomitant
with and
entailed by
the gift of
faith

concomitant
with the gift
of faith and
the result
of faith

Justification (imputation of righteousness)
Salvation
Reconciliation
Victory
Forgiveness

regeneration, sonship
bestowal of faith
quickenings
receiving or knowing or having
Christ's benefits

unio mystica
renovatio (good works)
the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
the gifts of the Spirit
hope
etc.

* The term justification is never used as taking place prior to faith except in a few passing statements or by implication in the exegesis of certain passages. Rather it is said that justification was procured, obtained, acquired, and brought about.

** These three terms are used interchangeably and as far as I can discern synonymously. The same German word *versöhnen* translates all three.

3. The basis of man's justification before God.

- a. The grace of God as the causa impulsiva interna justificationis.
(Hollaz, Examen Theologicum Aeroamaticum. Leipzig: 1741.
P. III, S. 1, C. 8, q. 4, p. 892)

The grace of God is that gratuitous benevolence of His whereby He holds us dear in Christ Jesus, pardons our sin and by sending His Holy Spirit into our hearts restores to us the gift of righteousness and holiness which had been lost and when our life has run its course blesses us with the happiness of eternal life. (Friedemann Beckmann, Theologiae Conscientiae, A 5)

- b. The causa impulsiva externa justificationis: the vicarious atonement and merit of Christ. (ibid., q. 5, p. 893)

The punishment for sin is the curse of the Law, but "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law" (Gal. 3:13). The punishment for sin is the dominion of Satan, but "Christ has freed us from the power of Satan" (Heb. 2:14). The punishment for sin is the wrath of God, but "Christ has freed us from the wrath to come" (I Thess. 1:10). The punishment for sin is death, but truly "Christ has liberated us from death" (Hos. 13:14). The punishment for sin is hell and eternal damnation, but now "Christ has freed us from hell and eternal condemnation" (Rom. 8:1). The righteousness of God does not permit the same sin to be punished twice; but God had already smitten His beloved Son for our sins (Isa. 53:4); therefore He will not punish sins in those who have been reconciled, who share the satisfaction established through Christ. If until now it had been necessary for us to make satisfaction for our sins, the perfect satisfaction of Christ would not yet have taken place, there would be no absolute work of redemption, and all things would not have been consummated through Him. But He on the cross said, "It is finished." (John Gerhard, Loci theologici, Tübingen, 1763, VI, 307)

The apostle contrasts a part with the whole (ὅλος ὁ κόσμος), that is to say, he contrasts himself and other believers with the entire human race; he is not contrasting some believers with other believers, nor does he distinguish between believers in respect to time and place. By the words ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου are understood all men, even those who are lost. Thus the sense of the verse must be this: Christ is the ἱλασμός not only for the sins of believing Christians, but of each and every sinful man and thus also of the damned. For here we have not only the general term κόσμος, which quite often in the Sacred Scriptures embraces men of all ages (Rom. 3:6,19; 5:12, etc.), but we have added another term of universal connotation ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου, "of the whole world." This is done so that we do not suppose that propitiation has been made only for some, but rather believe that propitiation has been made for all men in the world equally through Christ. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. III, Memb. II, S. I, Thesis 36, γ, Obs. 3)

The ἔχθρα indicates both active and passive. But especially the picture is of an angry God who is reconciled. But the principle is true, that God is an enemy of no one who is not first an enemy of God. (Sebastian Schmidt, Commentarii in Epistolas D. Pauli ad Romanos, Galatas & Colossenses, Hamburg, 1704, p. 350 /commenting on Rom. 5:10/)

Therefore the curse which we brought down upon ourselves by our transgression of the Law Christ bore and sustained for us by taking our place. That is to say, He paid by His Passion and death all the penalties which were owed by those who transgressed the Law. God imputed our obligations to His Son as to our Surety and Bondsman. On the basis of the Law God required from Him, as the one standing surety for the accused, the due penalties of sin. The Son voluntarily put Himself at the disposal of God the Father (Ps. 40:10,11; Heb. 10:7,9) and in our stead and place made Himself a bondsman on behalf of sinful man and a debtor. He took our cause upon Himself, that is, He undertook to pay all the debts of the world and to expiate all its sins. Thus the curse of the Law was not directed against the one who deserved it, but by an imputation arising from His suretyship against the One who took up our cause, and He truly felt and experienced that divine curse. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. III, Memb. II, S. I, Thesis 34, γ, Obs. 3)

The priestly office is a work of the God-man; accordingly Christ by the eternal counsel of God and by His own voluntary decision placed Himself in time under God's Law and did so on our behalf and in our stead. And by fulfilling that Law perfectly and by suffering all punishment He presented an obedience to divine righteousness which was sufficient to the last ounce (*ex asse*) and also freed us from the wrath of God, the curse of the Law, from sin and all evil. This obedience He now offers God the Father, and by His intercession He obtains everything good and needful for us. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. III, Memb. II, S. I., Thesis 14 /1696 ed. II, 213/)

Satisfaction is an act of the priestly office of Christ, the God-man. From an eternal decree of the Triune God and for the sake of His great mercy Christ gladly and willingly substituted Himself as the Surety and Bondsman for the entire human race, which had been cast into unspeakable misery through sin. By taking upon Himself each and every sin of the whole world, by His most perfect obedience, and by His suffering of the punishments which men had merited He satisfied the Holy Trinity, who had been grievously offended, and that through the whole time of His exinanition on earth and especially in His last agony. By thus making satisfaction He procured and merited for each and every man remission of all sins, exemption from all punishments of sin, grace and peace with God, eternal righteousness and salvation. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. III, Memb. II, S. I, Thesis 44)

It results in the same thing whether you say Christ reconciled God to us or us to God, because in both cases the enmity which existed between us and God was taken away by Christ. For just as man was inimical toward God, so God was offended with man because of sin. And this enmity between the two had to be done away with in order that reconciliation might take place between them. However, we are said to be reconciled to God both because He is the offended and we the offending party, and because the origin and source of reconciliation is to be found in God and not in us. Thus it is necessary for us that we be reconciled to Him whom we have offended (Matt. 5:23) just as a woman ought to be reconciled with a man whom she has irritated (I Cor. 7:11). And so II Cor. 5:19 says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Both parties had feelings of animosity toward the other, and so both must be reconciled. Reconciliation (*καταλλαγή* and *ἀποκαταλλαγή* Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20; I Cor. 28, etc.) is a reciprocal action by which both parties, the offending and the offended, are from enemies made into friends. Through the sacrifices of the OT God was pacified (II Sam. 24:25). How much more is He appeased through the sacrifice of Christ who was a propitiation through His blood (Rom. 3:25). To the contention that God was not at enmity with us we respond that it is false, for it is contrary to Ps. 5:5; 11:5; 31:6; 45:7; Rom. 1:18 and to the sanctity and essential righteousness of God (Rom. 5:10). This reconciliation has nothing to do with conversion and renewal of life. Against such a notion we argue in the following manner: whoever is an enemy (*inimicus*) of God because of his sins, to him God in turn is an enemy. Our major premise is proved from Isaiah 59:2 which says, "Our iniquities have separated us from God." Secondly we argue as follows: If by an act of conciliation the offending party has peace with the one who was offended and is received into his favor, then by that act of conciliation the offended party is reconciled with the one who offended Him. Well, this is just what happened through Christ's act of conciliation whereby He brought men and God together (Rom. 5:1,2). Thirdly, whatever act of conciliation frees us from the wrath of God also reconciles an angry God to us. Again the reconciliation of Christ was just such a reconciliation (Rom. 5:9,10). (Quenstedt, *Systema*, Par. III, C. III, Memb. II, S. II, q. 6, *ἐν δικηγόρῳ* 12 /1715 ed. II, 433/)

He who takes upon himself the sins of the human race by bearing and carrying them and in this way removing them from us also takes upon himself the wrath of God and by that very act arouses the avenging justice of God against Himself. The reason for this is clear. The wrath of God follows upon all sins. Therefore where the universal weight of sin is fixed the weight of God's wrath also oppresses with its burden. (John Dorsch, *Synopsis Theologiae Zachariae*, Frankfurt, 1683, C. IX, par. 286, p. 254)

Christ made atonement for sinful man in a twofold manner: first, by performing a complete and perfect obedience of the Law in our place and in this way fulfilling the Law; second, by taking upon Himself the punishment and curse of the Law which we had merited by our disobedience and willingly suffering all this. The point is that man not only had to be delivered from the wrath of God, the righteous Judge, but he also had to stand before God with a righteousness which he could not acquire except by the obedience of the Law. Therefore Christ undertook both tasks. He not merely suffered for us, but He also fulfilled the Law in all things, to the end that His fulfilling of the Law and His obedience might be reckoned to us for righteousness. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. III, Memb. II, S. I, Thesis 37, Nota 1)

The basis which merits our justification is Jesus Christ the God-man who in both of His natures is the one Mediator and Redeemer of the entire human race. Although He was Lord over the Law, for our sake He was made under the Law to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of children (Gal. 4:4,5). He not only observed the whole divine Law, but fulfilled it completely and exactly (Matt. 5:17,18). Thus He is called the end (telos) and the perfection of the Law (Rom. 10:4). But He also sustained the punishment which we deserved by our sins, He suffered and died in our place, as the whole Gospel history abundantly testifies. This entire obedience of His, both in what He did and what He suffered (which is commonly termed active and passive obedience), is called the righteousness of Christ, i.e. the righteousness which is revealed in the Gospel, and the righteousness of faith, i.e. the righteousness which is apprehended by faith and counted for righteousness to us who believe. (B. Mentzer, Exegesis Augustanae Confessionis. [Opera Latina. Frankfurt, 1669, I, 60/])

By His passion and His death in our place Christ truly and fully satisfied divine justice, by His sacrifice offered on the altar of the cross He meritoriously made payment for all sins and every sin of men, by His death He paid a sufficient ransom for us and by His blood whereby we are made clean He has truly reconciled an angry God to us, restored us in divine grace and redeemed and freed us from the guilt and punishment of all sins. This thesis is in response to the question, "Whether Christ in our place and for our sins has by His death made true and full satisfaction to divine justice." See ΕΚΘΕΣΙΣ, "We must distinguish between an adequate, perfect, full and sufficient satisfaction and a satisfaction which is inadequate, partial, imperfect and only partial. The satisfaction of Christ was not imperfect or partial so that it requires some satisfaction from us to implement it, but it is adequate, total and perfect." (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. III, Memb. II, S. II, q. 1, Thesis 1715 ed. II, 417-418/)

The Socinians held that God is reconciled only in the sense that He freely receives us (per simplicem in gratiam receptionem), not by the intervention of Christ for us stilling His wrath. Meisner answers, "We were the ones who grieved and offended God, God the one who was grieved and offended. And so we were separated and alienated from each other. But Christ intervened and reconciled God to us by His dying and us to God by the power of His death to convert us. For just as the alienation pertained to both sides, so also, the reconciliation. And just as in every $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\gamma\eta$ the offended person is first said to be reconciled and satisfaction is made to Him alone, so also God must first be reconciled and satisfaction must be made to Him alone. Hence we are said to be reconciled to Him through Christ (II Cor. 5:18), and the mode of the reconciliation is added in verse 21 where we are told that God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might in Him be made righteousness. Nor does this oppose the fact that God Himself is said to have reconciled us to Himself. For in this way the satisfaction and propitiation wrought through Christ are not excluded, but are considered in the light of God's gracious love and counsel by which He decreed to send His own Son into the world to die and make satisfaction for us, and thus to reconcile us to God and God to us. Finally, we must bear in mind that the term 'reconciliation' may mean two things.

1. to placate an offended person: in this sense Christ alone reconciled God by His dying, that is, He made God from one who was angry into one who was conciliated. 2. to receive one into grace, or to pass over past offences: in this sense God reconciled us to Himself, that is, He has received us once again into His grace because of the preceding propitiation of Christ. Now these two meanings do not conflict with each other but beautifully cohere with each other as antecedent and consequent, cause and effect." This is a very important citation, showing that Meisner and all the dogmatists had a clear conception of the relation between objective and subjective reconciliation, affirming emphatically both, but distinguishing and relating the concepts. Note that the Socinians (unitarians and all who have no atonement) believed only in a subjective atonement, or reconciliation. So it always is and must be with unitarians and all who deny the wrath of God. (Balthasar Meisner, Anthropologia Sacra, Wittenberg, 1667, Decas III, disp. 25, th. 54 /III, 215/)

This (mercy seat) was a type of Christ. In Christ the everlasting Father speaks to us and of this mercy seat, as it were, in a most friendly and fatherly way. Not only that, but Christ by His blood renders the Father at peace with us, so that those who come to Him in true faith can be certain of God's love and favor. For God reconciled us to Himself (through Christ /II Cor. 5:18/) and through Christ reconciled all things to Himself, by Him whether in earth or heaven (Col. 1:20). (Balduin, ibid., p. 70)

In every true reconciliation the wrath (indignatio) of the offended party precedes as well as the alienation of the offended party which makes necessary the reconciliation. Now the reconciliation which took place through Christ was a true reconciliation, unless you think the Apostle wrote falsehoods. Thus the wrath of the offended party, namely God, and the alienation of the party causing the offence, which was the human race, preceded reconciliation. Furthermore, after wrath and alienation have taken place the one who is reconciled to the party giving offence is eo ipso pacified, since to pacify is obviously nothing else than to make one who was angry and alienated gracious and merciful. Now through Christ the human race which offended God was reconciled to an irate and alienated God, and thus by this very action God was pacified. (Balthasar Meisner, Anthropologia Sacra, Wittenberg, 1667, 214 Decas III, Disp. 25, Th. 52)

Christus traditus est propter totius mundi peccata. Eodemque modo resuscitatus est propter justificationem ἡμῶν nostri h. e. totius mundi. (Schmidt, p. 328)

In Romans 4:25 the apostle joins the payment of punishment rendered for us through the death of Christ, as cause, with the justification, i.e. the remission of sins acquired in Christ's resurrection, as effect. Paul is not dealing with renewal here--something he discusses at length in chapter 6--but he is discussing the imputation of righteousness, as the whole sequence of the chapter shows. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. VIII, S. II, objectionum διὰ λόγους 1 /1715 ed. II, 783/)

Although Christ has gained for us the remission of sins, justification and sonship, God just the same does not justify us prior to our faith. Nor do we become God's children in Christ in such a way that justification in the mind of God takes place before we believe. (Calov, Apodixis articulorum fidei, Lüneberg, 1684, p. 249)

There is no difference between Jews and Gentiles either in respect to sin or in respect to the righteousness of faith before God. For sin holds all equally in its grip, the righteousness of faith all attain by grace alone. (Sebastian Schmidt, Commentarii in Epistolas D. Pauli ad Romanos, Galatas & Colossenses, Hamburg, 1704, p. 351 /commenting on Rom. 3:21/)

Paul here is comparing Adam and Christ in equal fashion: it is impossible that Christ could make less people righteous than Adam made sinners. (Schmidt, p. 380)

Wenn man nun fraget, ob Christus dem ganzen menschlichen Geschlechte eigentlich, im Werk und in der That selber die Erlösung vom ewigen Tod erworben, erlanget und zuwege gebracht, antworten wir ohne alles Wanken, fest und unwiderruflich: Ja. Wenn aber gefragt wird, ob Christus die Erlösung dem ganzen menschlichen Geschlechte conferirt, und daher das ganze menschliche Geschlecht Vergebung der Sünden empfangen habe, da antworten wir lauter Nein und stellens zu aller Christen Urtheil, ob wir hierum Calvinisch sein. Denn solch Conferiren heisst so viel, als dieselbige im Wort des Evangelii uns Menschen schenken, zurechnen und zueignen, welches anders nicht als durch den Glauben geschiehet. Wie auch solche Erlösung und die daher entspringende Vergebung der Sünden durch kein ander Mittel als durch den Glauben angenommen wird. Wer an Christum nie geglaubt hat (wie denn alle verstockte Juden und Türken und viele andere nimmermehr glauben), die haben freilich die Vergebung der Sünden niemals empfangen; wie könnte sonst wahr sein, das Johannes, der Thäufer, sagt: 'Wer an den Sohn nicht glaubet, Über dem bleibet der Zorn Gottes'? Joh. 3. So ist auch offenbar, wie St. Paulus die Vergebung der Sünden und unsere Rechtfertigung vor Gott durchaus für eins hält Röm. 4., und aus den Worten des 32. Ps., da von der Vergebung der Sünden geredet wird, erweist, dass wir durch den Glauben gerecht werden. (Baier-Walther, III, 286, Theologi Witebergenses, a. 1597, Bekenntniss von der ew. Gnadenwahl, Vid. Consil, Witeberg, I, 622, sq.)

The "Socinian dilemma" which evangelicals of the day could never successfully counter went like this: "Either God is unable, or He is unwilling to remit sins without satisfaction." They firmly believed that grace could transcend the need of any propitiation or satisfaction, and they argued that their God was a more gracious and loving Father than the God of the evangelicals who demanded satisfaction and punishment for sin. In answering this argument, which is still popular with all unitarians, the dogmatists do not spend time conceding that God could do what He wishes and pointing out that the dilemma contains a contradiction in terms, but answer from Scripture and from a biblical view of God which the Socinians never really caught. Quenstedt says, "In this issue our adversaries wrongly look upon God as an absolute Lord without any respect to His righteousness. But God does not act that way, as an absolute Lord. God cannot deny Himself, His holiness, His truth, His righteousness. This is the reason He set forth Christ as an ἱλαστήριον through faith in His blood, εἰς ἐνδοξασθὲν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ, to demonstrate that He is righteous" (Rom. 3:25). And in all this God does not act as some inferior judge who is limited in some way, but as the supreme judge of the universe (Ps. 9:4; 50:6; 98:9). But perhaps most tellingly Quenstedt says, "Scripture never teaches that God forgives sins by absolute grace." The "pious" gratia absoluta of the Socinians was the denial of Christ and the Gospel, and ironically, of grace itself. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. III, Memb. II, S. I, Thesis 22 /1696 ed. II, 223/)

"We must distinguish between the application of the remission of sins and its acquisition. . . . We submit that the former, namely the application of the remission of sins and their actual removal (actualem oblationem), Christ, who is established at the right hand of God, brings about by making us partakers of the fruit and power of his offering and sacrifice. However, the acquisition of the forgiveness of sins has already been accomplished through the offering and sacrifice of Christ which took place on the cross. The question is therefore being asked: 'Was the sacrificial offering of Christ whereby He made expiation for our sins and secured God's own remission of sins and procured the right of forgiveness and remission of sins for us--was all this accomplished on the altar of the cross? Or does this only take place in heaven?' The former is our position; the Socinians affirm the latter." Quenstedt makes two important points here, points essential to grasp if we are to understand what Christ has once and for all done for us to save and forgive us and in relation to our apprehending this benefit. As the atonement is a past accomplished fact, so is forgiveness which is the result of the atonement, but the application (or we might say, the appropriation or actual having) of the work of Christ and its results occurs as the Spirit of God brings the individual to faith. Second, the atonement and result of it ex parte Dei represent not just a change of mind in God in coelis, but represent and describe what actually took place in history and in our place in ora crucis. Clearly the Socinians confuse, as Quenstedt proceeds to say, the high priestly and kingly office of Christ, making forgiveness and salvation the result of His kingly office, the fullness of which Christ did not even exercise until after the vicarious satisfaction which took place "on earth" (and was the carrying out of His priestly office) was accomplished. They deny that any atonement took place on earth, or even that Christ carried out the primary function of His Sacerdotal office on earth (Cat. Racov. c. 18 de Mun. Christi q. 8). Christ's death was not an offering for sin, but was only preparatory to what takes place in heaven where the "absolute victim" somehow appears before God and makes atonement. Quenstedt, after citing Heb. 1:3; 11:14; 4:14-16; 9:26 (cf. Lev. 1:5; 3:2; 4:14,15,33-35), points out that Christ was not offered or killed in heaven. "In heaven no wasting of the body of Christ takes place. Neither is there any expiatory sacrifice without the shedding of blood. But the appearance of Christ in heaven is without the shedding of blood" (cf. Thesis 39, 40). (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. III, S. II, q. 5, Dist. 4 /1715 ed. II, 409/)

Commenting on Romans 5:10, Sebastian Schmidt says:

. . . reconciliavit nos meritorie et aquisitorie Deo, et in justificatione meritum hoc ejus applicatum est, ut in statum reconciliatorum collocaremur. (Sebastian Schmidt, Commentarii in Epistolas D. Pauli ad Romanos, Galatas & Colossenses, Hamburg, 1704, p. 350.)

(Sebastian Schmidt, Commentarii in Epistolas D. Pauli ad Romanos, Galatas & Colossenses, Hamburg, 1704, p. 378)

Although the orthodox Lutherans do not make a great point out of a concept of universal justification, as they do against the Calvinists in the case of universal grace, universal atonement, redemption and reconciliation, they nevertheless do assert the doctrine when they believe the Scriptures demand it. Or they do so in passing when speaking in all sorts of contexts about the consequences of the work of Christ. But ordinarily they restrict the word justification to contexts where they speak of the appropriation (by faith) of Christ's benefits. That they teach what we today have called "general" or objective justification is brought out in Schmidt's discussion of Rom. 5:18. The verse "clearly" shows three things he says, "Through Adam 1) the sin of the one came 2) upon all men 3) into condemnation; through Christ 1) the obedience, righteousness of the one 2) came to all men 3) into justification of life." The "all men" in each case must be taken in the widest possible sense, referring to "each member" of the human race, reprobate or elect. But certainly, the Calvinists argue, all are not "actually" justified through the obedience of Christ. Neither, replies Schmidt, are all "actually" condemned through the sin of Adam. The Calvinists "have confused shamefully goal and event, merit and its application."

Footnote: In the same context Schmidt says, "*Δικαίωμα* and *δικαίωσις* really ought to be distinguished lest we become guilty of tautology. Now how ought they to be distinguished, how can the difference be taught? Well, *δικαίωμα* is set in opposition to *παράπτωμα* which is a damning sin, and thus it is a righteousness which justifies, it is the righteousness of Christ which is imputed and by the imputation of which we are justified just as by the communication of Adam's sin we are damned. But *δικαίωσις* is set in opposition to *κατάκριμα* which is the act of condemnation, and is the very act of justification whereby God justifies us."

4. The forensic meaning. (*ibid.*, q. 2, p. 889)

Justification is an act of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, an act which forgives the sinner all his sins, imputes to him the righteousness of Christ and receives him into everlasting life. It is an act of pure grace, love and mercy, performed because of the most holy obedience which our Mediator Christ rendered to the entire divine Law and because of the full-satisfaction He made. The sinner is justified who through the ministry of the Gospel truly believes that Christ is the Redeemer of the whole world, and he is justified by grace without his own work or merits. (B. Mentzer, Exegesis Augustanae Confessionis. [*Opera Latina*. Frankfurt, 1669, I, 607])

The forensic term indicates that the justification of the sinner is not something trifling or perfunctory; but the whole man stands in the presence of God's judgment, and he is examined according to his nature and his works--and that by the rule of divine Law. However, after sin entered the world, man in this life does not truly and completely conform to the Law of God. Thus nothing can be found in man, either in his nature or his works, which he can offer so that he might be justified before God. Rather the Law pronounces the sentence of condemnation upon him, a sentence written with the finger of God. Now God does not justify the ungodly through some error, like a judge who passes a verdict when he has not examined or acquainted himself sufficiently with a case. Nor does God justify the ungodly carelessly, as though He were not really disturbed over the transgression of His Law. Nor does He justify in an unfair manner, as though He approved of injustice and connived and colluded with the ungodly. God Himself would adjudge such a justification to be an abomination (Ex. 23:1; Isa. 5:23; Prov. 17:15). No, God cannot take back His decision of condemnation which is revealed in the Law unless He has been given satisfaction (Matt. 5:18). If God is to justify, justice and satisfaction are required. Luther correctly said, God remits no sin unless satisfaction has been rendered for it to the Law. . . . And so because God does not justify out of fickleness or carelessness or mistakenness or injustice and because nothing can be found in man by which He can be justified by God,--and yet the righteousness of the Law must be fulfilled in the one to be justified (Rom. 8:4)--it is necessary that a foreign righteousness intervene. This foreign righteousness is such that the payment of guilt and the complete obedience of the Law satisfied divine wrath. And the result is that there can be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. To this righteousness the sinner, terrified and condemned by the voice of the Law, flees with true faith. He desires, implores and seizes this righteousness. To this righteousness he surrenders himself. This righteousness he sets against the judgment of God and the accusation of the Law. And by virtue of this righteousness and its being imputed to him he is justified, that is, absolved from the sweeping sentence of condemnation, and he receives the decree of life eternal. (Martin Chemnitz, Loci Theologici, II, 251)

Our justification does not take place by an actual expulsion of our sin and a corresponding infusion of righteousness nor by a change from unrighteousness to an inherent righteousness in us, but it consists in a moral change which makes (constituit) a man righteous by a judicial action and one completely extrinsic to him, a change of such a kind that it does not reside in a man, but pertains to a person and is extrinsic to him. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. VIII, S. I, Thesis 12, Nota)

The word justify never in the Scriptures signifies to infuse the quality of righteousness into someone, but denotes nothing else than to determine or account a person righteous judicially, or to make one righteous (justum facere) by an act totally extrinsic to man, an act extrinsically designating its own subject.

(Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. VIII, S. I, Thesis 3, Nota /1715 ed. II, 738/)

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5. What justification is (forma justificationis):

- a. The non-imputation (forgiveness) of sin, and
- b. The imputation of Christ's righteousness.

We must distinguish between a mere putative righteousness which denies the reality of the righteousness and the imputed righteousness which can be reckoned to others. The righteousness of Christ which has been reckoned to us is in itself neither putative nor fictitious, but absolutely real corresponding exactly to God's mind and will expressed in the law, nor as a reckoning is it a mere act of imputing something, but it is an absolutely real judgment of God which is rendered from the throne of grace through the Gospel in respect to the sinner who believes in Christ. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. VIII, S. II, q. 5, Obj. ἀλλοῦ /1715 ed. II, 783/)

The righteousness of Christ is not our formal righteousness nor a righteousness that inheres in us subjectively but is our real and sufficient righteousness by imputation. We do not through this righteousness become righteous by a righteousness inhering in us, but through the imputation of this righteousness we are formally justified in such a way that without it there is no substance of our righteousness before God. From this fact that the righteousness of God is extrinsic to us we conclude that it does not dwell in us formally and intrinsically. And yet it does not follow therefore that righteousness cannot be reckoned to us extrinsically and objectively. For certainly our sins were extrinsic to Christ, and yet they could be imputed for punishment and guilt to Him and reckoned to Him. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. VIII, S. II, q. 5, Observ. 12 /1715 ed. II, 777/)

19. And in this sense, when there is in the one to whom the imputation is made no basis for the imputation but its opposite, the Hebrew זָרָא and the Greek $\lambda\omicron\gamma\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\varsigma$, is frequently used. Gen. 31:15: "Are we not regarded (זָרָא) by him as foreigners?" Num. 18:27 says of the Levites who had no part of the land: "It shall be reckoned to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor."

Ps. 144:3: "What is the son of man that Thou does regard him?" Rom. 2:26: "His uncircumcision will be regarded as circumcision."

20. But does God impute righteousness to believers without any basis whatever? Certainly He Himself says that this is an abomination (Prov. 17:15; Is. 5:23). And that basis is indeed not in us, for righteousness is imputed without works according to Rom. 4. And there, finally, Paul clearly shows what and where the basis of this imputation is. It is imputed, he says, "to us who believe in Him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification," that is, the satisfaction and obedience of Christ is the basis out of regard for which, and by reason and worthiness of which, God by grace imputes righteousness to the believers.

21. And so we have the complete relation. The basis is the righteousness of Christ. The object is the believing person, to whom the imputation of righteousness and blessedness is made. That which confers the gift is the mercy of God, which imputes righteousness without works. And thus faith is imputed for righteousness not because of its worthiness as a virtue but because it apprehends the merit of Christ and the mercy of God in the promise of the Gospel, in which is found both the basis and the conferring of the imputation of righteousness for blessedness. (Martin Chemnitz, trans. by Fred Kramer, Examination of the Council of Trent, Part 1, St. Louis, 1971, p. 533)

The righteousness which no one can accomplish, no one can acquire, no one can bestow except God, a righteousness which is God's alone and can be ours only by imputation. This righteousness alone avails before God. . . and this righteousness of God stands in opposition to that righteousness which men are able to accomplish by their own eminent works of the Law. (Schmidt, p. 250)

The imputation is not a mere opinion, some mere figment, as the papists rail against us as teaching, neither is it an infusion or ingrafting of some reality or other as when shoots are said to be imputed to plants. . . . Imputation is contrary to such a subjective indwelling, and is nothing else than a real application of the merit and righteousness of Christ which was fulfilled apart from us (extra nos) and imputed (ad scriptae) to us through faith. . . . This is not an essential imputation according to which sins dwelling in us are said to be imputed or not imputed, but it is a judgmental imputation (imputatio cognitionis), or determinative imputation (decreti) whereby a foreign reality is really applied or attributed to someone. This term imputation is borrowed from logic where a calculation has its validity not in itself but in its context. And so a cognitive or determinative imputation has two sides to it. First, it becomes the imputation of a thing by one person to another, in this case the righteousness of Christ to us and our unrighteousness in turn to Him, and this transfer takes place solely by the determination and judgment of God. According to this understanding Paul writes that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us and our sins to Christ (II Cor. 5:/21/). In this imputation a thing absent is received and had instead of a thing present, for the righteousness of Christ which is not in us is reckoned by God to be in us and our sin which is not in Christ is reckoned by God to be in Him. Second, it is an imputation of value and worth whereby the value and worth of our things are transferred to another by a reckoning or determination, and this in such a way that he has the place and status of the other; just as the intercession of a criminal begs for the status of innocence, the faith of the believer seeks the status of righteousness. In this sense faith is said to be imputed for righteousness as though the person himself were righteous in himself because he has received upon request the righteousness of another. (Friedrich Balduin, Commentarius in omnis Epistulas Beati Apostoli Pauli, Frankfurt, p. 78 /commenting on Rom. 4:5/)

It is not just the same thing to say, "Christ's righteousness is imputed to us" and to say "Christ is our righteousness." For the imputation did not take place when Christ became our righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is the effect of His office. The imputation is the application of the effect of His office. The one (however) does not do away with the other. Christ is our righteousness effectively because He justifies us. His righteousness is ours objectively because our faith rests in Him. His righteousness is ours formally insofar as His righteousness is imputed to us. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. VIII, S. II, q. 5, Observatio 19 /1715 ed. II, 787/)

The imputation consists in a real reckoning. According to the judgment of God the sinful man who believes in Christ is absolved of sins and the righteousness of Christ is truly reckoned to him. Now granted that the reckoning does not work the result that the righteousness of Christ inheres inherently in the believer; the imputation, nevertheless, is not thereby fictitious and imaginary, a mere opinion of a just person, without any actual effect, as the papists maliciously report us as teaching. No, this λειτουργία or imputation is earnest and real. It has its gracious foundation in Christ and its termination in us (ad nos). It consists in a gracious determination of God and in a real conferring and transferring of Christ's righteousness to the believer. And so when one believes, he is by this reckoning made and accounted righteous in the judgment of God's mind. And this is a most real judgment of God which from the throne of His grace extends over the sinner who from the Gospel believes in Christ. . . . Those to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed are truly righteous, although not inherently or by inherence, but imputatively and through an extrinsic designation that they are such, for also from that which is extrinsic a true designation can take place. Therefore it is a vain question, whether we are really righteous by that imputation, or whether we are only regarded as righteous. For God's judgment is according to truth. Wherefore he who is regarded by God as righteous is truly righteous. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. VIII, Thesis 18, 19 [1696 ed. II, 524-525])

6. Faith's function in justification.

a. Faith as receptivity.

Therefore the nature of faith as it has to do with justification (fides justificans) is apprehension, receptivity, or the application of the promise of grace, according to the language of Scripture. (Chemnitz, Loci theologici, Wittenberg, 1653, II, 251)

In the matter of justification faith must be understood not merely as knowledge and a general acceptance that the promise of the Gospel is true, but faith embraces also activities of the heart and will. That is to say, there is a desire and trust by which sinners in their wrestlings with sin and with the wrath of God apply to themselves the promise of grace. Hence each believer includes himself in these general promises, and arouses himself to say without hesitation that the promise of the Gospel is effectual also in respect to him. And thus he receives comfort and life in times of temptation. (Martin Chemnitz, Loci Theologici, II, 251)

There is no difference between believing God when He speaks promises and believing in God. "Abraham believed God (Gen. 15:6) in such a way that Abraham believed in God, believed in Him as the one who promises things gratuitously and gives the righteousness by which the things promised are bestowed." (Schmidt, p. 380)

Justifying faith is our confidence of divine mercy in Christ, it is trust in Jesus, assurance that He has paid for our sins, restored us to righteousness and gained eternal salvation for us; and it is therefore confidence that for Christ's sake God forgives us our sins and in His grace wishes to rescue us for an inheritance of eternal life. (Abraham Calov, Apodixis Articulorum Fidei. Lüneburg, 1684. p. 300)

When the hand of a starving man seizes bread which is offered to it, it is not this taking of the bread which satisfies the man, for he could seize a piece of mud or a stone or something else which could not satisfy him, but his being satisfied depends on the object which he takes to himself and depends on his eating it, i.e. it depends on the bread. When the lips of a thirsty man drink water which has been drawn with a bucket from some well, it is not the drinking as such that quenches his thirst, for you can also draw sand or blood with a bucket. No, if his thirst is to be satisfied, the drink which he consumes must have the power to quench thirst. Thus he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness receives it through faith, as the begging hand which received the bread coming down from heaven (John 6:50-51) and as the vessel of the thirsting soul draws the water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14); but it is not this receiving and drinking as such which drives away the spiritual hunger and quenches the thirst. Man does not possess anything of such a nature as can accomplish this, e.g. his own merits, his own pretended autonomy, satisfactions which are the inventions of the Synagogue of Rome. No, the whole strength of man's receiving depends on the thing received through faith, the redemption and the blood of Jesus Christ. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. II, C. VIII, Thesis 11, Nota /1896 ed. II, 519/)

There are three parts or activities of faith: knowledge, assent and trust. According to the first we believe without doubt certain things about God, according to the second we believe without doubt God, according to the third we believe without doubt in God. Heretics can have the first; only orthodox can have the second, only the regenerate the third. Now the last always contains the first, but the first does not always contain the last. The first two pertain to the intellect, the third to the will. The first two look to the whole Word of God, the last to the promises of grace and the merit of Christ. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. IV, C. VIII, S. I, Thesis 5, Nota /1715 ed. II, 1335/)

Justifying faith is true knowledge and firm assent to the divine Word. It is first and foremost the heart's unhesitating confidence that in all necessities, even when the entire soul is quaking because of sin, the poor sinner can conclude with all certainty that God wishes to forgive sins for the sake of His Son Jesus, not just the sins of others, but his own sins, even though he is the greatest of sinners, and that God reckons to him Christ's righteousness and gives him eternal life. (Jesper Brochmand, Definitiones Articulorum Fidei, Copenhagen, 1662. A7.)

Faith is not merit, but the means (instrumentum) of our justification. By faith we apprehend the righteousness of Christ which was imputed to us by God. And so we are said to be justified not because of faith, but through faith. (Balduin, op. cit., 75)

b. Justification non post, non propter, sed per fidem.

Now since there is no other medium in man through which righteousness and salvation are apprehended except faith, there is every reason in the world to say that we are justified by faith alone. (Olav Odhelius, Disputationum homologeticarum in Augustanam Confessionem prima-sexta, Uppsala, 1653, p. 227)

c. Faith alone.

The causality of faith in the act of justification is nothing other than organic in that it justifies simply by apprehending the merits of Christ. The reason for its causality, its justifying role, has to do with faith not in itself and insofar as it is an apprehension of something and thus our act which has some kind of dignity, small or great, either in itself and by its own nature, or because it is highly pleasing and acceptable to God. No, the reason for the causality of faith consists only in the justifying object which is apprehended. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. VIII, S. I, Thesis 11)

On our part it is this faith alone which justifies us and effects (influit) our justification. Whatever merely embraces apprehends to itself the promises of grace, the forgiveness of sins and the merit of Christ does so without any admixture of works. And only that on the part of man which enters into the picture when we consider God justifying him can be said to justify. Thus we are said to be justified by faith exclusively without the deeds of the Law (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8,9). True, faith is never alone, never all by itself and isolated from good works, and yet faith alone apprehends the merit of Christ, and we are justified by means of faith alone. (Quenstedt, Systema, P. III, C.8, S.1, Th. 11 /III, 519/)

d. The object of faith.

Justifying faith (in terms of its nature /causa formalis/ has to do with its object. Not by a general or superficial assent, certainly not by some Epicurean persuasion, but by a real and earnest (serio) movement of mind, will and heart faith desires, seeks, apprehends, receives and applies personally to all believers the promise of free reconciliation for the sake of Christ the Mediator, so that in this reconciliation faith takes its rest in righteousness, salvation and eternal life (Gal. 3:14, Rom. 5:11).

(Chemnitz, Loci theologici, Wittenberg, 1653, II, 251)

This faith does not justify absolutely as a quality in us, nor by its own power as our action, nor by any capacity it has to choose; but only organically and relatively insofar as it has to do with its object, God in Christ, and as it embraces the grace of God and the atonement of Christ. (Odhelius, ibid., p. 226)

In the matter of our justification faith ought not be considered as a quality, virtue or disposition which inheres in us, certainly not as some work of ours, since in the matter of our justification faith is opposed to all of our works and qualities (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8; Gal. 2:16), but faith must be considered as centered in the blood of Christ. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. VIII, S. II, q. 6 objectionum διαλογισ 1, /1715 ed. II, 793/)

Faith is not a human persuasion, which some falsely ascribe to us, a persuasion which would in every case fail. No, it is a work of God and gift of the Holy Spirit in us. We are not justified by faith insofar as it is a quality in us, as again the enemies of God's grace, the neo-Pelagians, falsely accuse us of teaching that the unrighteous are justified when they have a certain idea (or rather dream) that they are righteous. No, we are justified by faith insofar as it apprehends Christ who was made righteousness for us by God, sanctification and redemption, and insofar as faith is concerned applies Christ's merit to itself. (Jacob Heerbrand, disputatio de gratia, Tuebingen, 1572, p. 15)

7. Justification and good works.

Our certainty of justification is not conjectural, but infallible and divine. After justification the believer who has faith in Christ is certain, and he ought to be, certain that for Christ's sake his sins are remitted and that he stands in the grace of God and is an heir of eternal life. (Quenstedt, Systema, Par. III, C. VIII, S. I, Thesis 23, Nota /1715 ed. II, 758/)

Faith is reckoned for righteousness not certainly because it is a work of ours, for all works are excluded here, and faith is imputed *Χωρὶς ἔργων* ; but faith is counted for righteousness in that it apprehends Christ and His righteousness. It is through this righteousness alone that we are made righteous. (Calov, Socinismus profligatus, hoc est, Errorum Socinianorum luculenta confutatio, Wittenberg, 1668, p. 758)

The Lutheran Church has always taught that renewal must and does follow reconciliation, and in such a manner that the Holy Spirit comes with the remission of sins, and He begins renewal in us. Therefore the Holy Spirit initiates sanctification and renewal in those who have been reconciled because of Christ the Mediator . . . Thus in no sense do we teach that justifying faith is all alone, that is, that it is a mere persuasion which is without repentance and with no good works springing from it. Such faith without works is barren and dead. We insist that it is not true and living faith at all which does not work by love (Gal. 5:6). (Martin Chemnitz, Examen, 188)